

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 150936Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3698

INFO COMUSSAG NKP THAILAND IMMEDIATE

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COMIPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2935

EXDIS - MILITARY COMMANDS HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON, USDAO SAIGON FROM NHA TRANG
14 MAR 75 REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NHA TRANG 0164

DAO FOR AOSOP/IX-IS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: MILITARY SITUATION IN MR-II

REF: A. NHA TRANG 0160; B. NHA TRANG 0161

1. WE DISCUSSED THE OVERALL MILITARY SITUATION IN MR-II WITH
II CORPS CHIEF OF STAFF, COL. LE KHAC LY, IN PLEIKU THIS MORNING
(MARCH 14).

2. LY CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD NOCKNOWLEDGE OF THE WHEREABOUTS OF
THE FORMER DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 23RD COL. VU THE QUANG OR THE
DARLAC PROVINCE CHIEF, COL. NGUYEN TRONG LUAT. BOTH HAD BEEN
SPOTTED LEAVING BAN ME THUOT ON THE BACK OF A TANK OR APC BUT
HAD NOT BEEN SEEN SINCE. HOWEVER, LY HAD BEEN INFORMED BY J-2
SAIGON, THAT LUAT WAS A PRISONER OF WAR. THE NEW DARLAC PROVINCE
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CHIEF, APPOINTED TODAY, IS COL. TRINH TIEU WHO WAR FORMERLY II

CORPS G-2. THE PROVINCE HQS WILL BE AT PHUOC AN FOR NOW.

3. LY COMMENTED ON COMMUNIST LOSSES IN THE BATTLE THUS FAR. HE BELIEVED THAT SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 20 AND 25 COMMUNIST TANKS HAD BEEN DESTROYED IN THE BAN ME THUOT AREA TO DATE BUT SAID COMMUNIST FORCES STARTED WITH ABOUT 50 SO THEY STILL HAD A LOT LEFT. THERE WERE BOTH PT 76 AND T-54 TANKS, HE SAID, BUT MORE OF THE FORMER. HE DID NOT GIVE A COMPLETE TALLY OF OTHER COMMUNIST LOSSES BUT REFERRED TO AN ACTION THIS MORNING IN WHICH AIR STRIKES HAD HIT A COMMUNIST REGT. LOCATED ABOUT 4-5 KMS WEST AND A LITTLE NORTH OF BAN ME THUOT AT CHU EBUR MT. IN THAT ACTION 4 37MM AA GUNS WERE SILENCED, NINE 103 MM CANNON DESTROYED AND AN AMMO DUMP BLOWN UP. SMOKE FROM THE AMMO DUMP REACHED 1200 METERS IN THE AIR, HE SAID.

4. IN PLEIKU, COL. PHAM DUY TAT HAD FULL COMMAND. HIS FORCES WERE THE 4TH RANGER GROUP, THE 7TH RANGER GROUP (JUST ARRIVED AND REPLACING THE 44TH REGT), THE 25TH RANGER GROUP AT THANH AN AND THE 23RD RANGER GROUP MINUS 1 BN. THE OPPOSING COMMUNIST FORCE WAS THE 968TH WHICH, ACCORDING TO COL. LY, HAS MOVED ITS HQS CLOSER TO THANH AN.

5. IN KONTUM THERE ARE ONLY THE 6TH AND 22ND RANGER GROUPS AND 1 BN OF THE 23RD. COL. PHAN DINH HUNGBK THE PROVINCE CHIEF, IS IN FULL COMMAND OF THESE FORCES. THZUCOMMUNIST FORCES IN KONTUM ARE SOME REMAINING ELEMENTS OF THE F-10 DIV.

6. COL. LY COMMENTED THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO REOPEN HIGHWAY 21 FROM NINH HOA TO DARLAC PROVINCE. TWO MORE RF BNS FROM NINH THUAN AND BINH THUAN HAD BEEN DISPATCHED TO THE KHANH HOA PROVINCE CHIEF, COL. LY BA PHAM, TO DO THE JOB; PHAM NOW HAS 5 RF BNS PLUS ARTILLERY, ARMOR, AND AIR SUPPORT AT HIS DISPOSAL. LY SAID THE PRESIDENT HAD ORDERED HIGHWAY 21 REOPENED AT ALL COSTS.

7. RE HIGHWAY 19, COL. LY COMMENTED THAT THE 47TH REGT IN BINH DINH HAS SUFFERED VERY HEAVY CASUALTIES BY THE 22ND DIVISION CO, BRIG GEN NIEM DID NOT WANT TO PULL THEM OUT YET FOR FEAR OF THE MORALE EFFECT ON THE POPULATION. THREE REGT'S OF THE 22ND ARE CURRENTLY CHARGED WITH REOPENING HIGHWAY 19 IN BINH DINH. IN PLEIKU PROVINCE ON HIGHWAY 19, BRIDGES 31 AND 32 WERE BLOWN
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YESTERDAY. THE 4TH RANGER GROUP IS TRYING TO CLEAR THE ROAD THERE. ITS 44TH BN HAS SUCCEEDED IN TAKING TWO OUTPOSTS TO THE NORTH OF THE HIGHWAY AND ITS 43RD BN HAS 2 COMPANIES ON OUTPOST 94 ALONG WITH THE 279TH RF BN. FIRE BASE 94 IS STILL COMMUNIST CONTROLLED BUT THE GVN CONTINUES TO CONTROL THE AN KHE PASS.

8. LY NOTED THAT A NEW COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM BETWEEN PHUOC AN

AND LAC THIEN DISTRICTS IN DARLAC AND KHANH HOA PROVINCE HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED YESTERDAY. HE SAID FURTHER THAT THE 5TH ALC HAD ESTABLISHED FORWARD SUPPLY POINTS IN KHANH DUONG AND DUC MY IN KHANH HOA PROVINCE WHERE A 3 DAY SUPPLY FOR 1 REGT WAS STORED. THE 23RD DIVISION'S LOGISTICS SUPPLY BN WOULD ALSO HAVE ELEMENTS IN THOSE CENTERS.

9. FINALLY, LY DISCUSSED RECENT COMMUNIST ROCKET ATTACKS. ON MARCH 13, CU HANH (PLEIKU) AIRFIELD TOOK 23 X 122 MM ROCKETS, WHICH DESTROYED ANOTHER 2 A-37 JETS. ON THE SAME DAY, NHEO REO (CAPITAL OF PHU BON) TOOK 3 X 107MM ROCKETS, WHICH KILLED ONE CIVILIAN AND WOUNDED ANOTHER; PHU TUC SUBSECTOR HQS, PHU BON, ALSO RECEIVED INCOMING ORDNANCE, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER THIS PRODUCED ANY CASUALTIES OR DAMAGE. (LATE NEWS: THANH AN DISTRICT TOWN, PLEIKU, TOOK 20 ROUNDS OF 107MM ON MARCH 14, WITHOUT SUFFERING ANY CASUALTIES OR DAMAGE.)

10. LY SAID THAT THE SITUATION IN QUANG DUC AT THE MOMENT LOOKED BETTER. GVN FORCES IN KIEN DUC HAD SUCCESSFULLY WITHSTOOD ASSAULTS AND REPORTEDLY THE 24TH RANGER GROUP HAD KILLED MANY ATTACKERS. QUANG DUC PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS THAT WAS ONLY ONE MILITARY INCIDENT ON MARCH 13; KIEN TU VILLAGE (YU 740240) RECEIVED AN ESTIMATED 600 ROUNDS OF MIXED MORTAR FIRE BUT SUSTAINED ONLY LIGHT CASUALTIES. SPEAR UNQUOTE

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